nest was not a tubular one and death occurred in non-breeding season (breeding season in South India chiefly March to May according to Ali & Ripley 1972). I have discussed this matter with Dr. Sálim Ali and others. The cause of death in this case could not be ascertained. The probable explanation seems to be that there was some sort of non-functioning of internl organs of this particular swallow which may have resulted from exhaustion or food poisoning.

It may be noted that there was no change in weather factors like relative humidity, rainfall and temperature during September, 1976 in relation to previous ten years record obtained from Coonoor.

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10. MALABAR JUNGLE BABBLER, *TURDOIDES STRIATUS MALABARICUS* (JERDON) AND WHITEHEADED BABBLER *TURDOIDES AFFINIS AFFINIS* (JERDON) JOINTLY CARING FOR THE CHICKS OF THE LATTER

In the course of a comparative study of the biology of the above-mentioned two species which co-exist in the Calicut University campus (10°-12°N., 75°-77° E.) we came across the following incident. In our campus the two species live together without much conflict even though their home ranges and food overlap considerably. On the 31st March 1976 V. J. Zacharias found a nest of the Whiteheaded Babbler with three nestlings situated at a spot where the home ranges of a flock of the Jungle Babbler with ten birds and one of the Whiteheaded Babbler with four members overlapped. This nest was built on a woody creeper *Calicopteris floribunda* at a height of 8 m from the ground. Six Jungle and three Whiteheaded Babblers fed the nestlings and at night one Jungle Babbler stayed with the nestlings. The rest of the birds of both species roosted separately within distances of 36 to 40 m from the nest. The food given to the nestlings by both species consisted of orthopterans like *Gryllus* sp. Very often the two species moved together peacefully and would sit on adjacent branches to preen. In about 14 hours of observation spread over two weeks 6 clashes were observed between the two species and every time the Jungle Babblers managed to drive away the Whiteheaded Babblers but the latter never deserted the chicks totally. The dominant Jungle Babblers defended the nestlings more often. The fledglings followed the Jungle Babblers but the Whiteheaded Babblers also fed and defended them whenever they got the opportunity. In spite of vigorous defensive displays by both species a Rat snake (*Ptyas mucosus*) took one fledgling on the 3rd April. By the 4th one more fledgling and by

the 16th April the last of them disappeared. To the last both species of babblers attended to the young.

The exact reason for this behaviour of the babblers is not known. The two species differ in size, colour and vocalizations. The Whiteheaded Babbler is more often seen in open areas with little or no cover of trees and shrubs, but both species often forage together and we have observed a Whiteheaded Babbler foraging with a flock of Jungle Babbler continuously for six months. In our study area both species of birds are constantly disturbed by the construction of new buildings and by firewood gatherers, and the home ranges of both species of babblers change from time to time.

In the present case we could not spot the nest at the time of building. It is possible that the Jungle Babblers also had built a nest at about the same time as the other species and at a spot close by and lost it. They may then have forced the Whiteheaded Babblers out of their nest and taken possession. Both species build similar nests and their eggs have the same colour. Both are parasitised by cuckoos and thus conditioned to accept alien chicks. In the coming months we hope to shift eggs from one species of babbler to the other to study their response.

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11. PURPLERUMPED SUNBIRDS AS FOSTER PARENTS

In the second week of August 1976, in an open plot in Vithalwadi, about 3 km from the centre of Poona City, a nest of a Purplerumped Sunbird was seen hanging from a twig of a *Caesalpinia sepiaria* bush. The nest was at a height of about 5 ft from the ground.

When the nest was first located, it contained two eggs. The eggs were white speckled with brown and in size equivalent to Redvented Bulbul's eggs. The female sunbird was seen incubating the eggs.

A chick was first seen inside the nest on 26th August. It was dark brown in colour and appeared rather big for a sunbird's chick. The shape of its beak was also different. How the other egg was disposed off was not known ; neither did we find the shell of the hatched egg. The possibility of brood parasitism had not occurred to us then.

On 16th September it was observed that the entrance hole was enlarged and the chick was not inside the nest. On an adjacent acacia (babul) tree the female sunbird was seen feeding the chick which was now of the size of a redvented bulbul minus tail. Its colour was dark grey with brown spots on the chest. The